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RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY 6647
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 8371
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY 3934
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 1418
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ JUN 5211
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO PRIORITY 9753
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 2616
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY 2452
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RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 000843

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/11/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SOCI](#) [ELAB](#) [ETRD](#) [ECON](#) [PE](#)
SUBJECT: PROTESTS PEACEFUL, NATIONALIST CONGRESSMEN
SUSPENDED

REF: LIMA 830 (AND PREVIOUS)

Classified By: Pol/C Alexis Ludwig for reasons 1.4(c) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Thousands of students, union members, and others in numerous cities nationwide protested on June 11 to support Amazon community demands (refs), with few reported injuries and mishaps. Whereas relative calm prevailed on the streets, tensions inside Congress peaked when legislators voted to suspend seven Nationalist Party (PNP) members for 120 days for protesting inside chambers. Garcia appointed political independent Francis Allison as Minister of Housing, and sent the previous Minister, Nidya Vilchez, to head the Ministry of Social Development. End summary.

Protests: Generally Peaceful

¶2. (C) The June 11 protests in support of Amazon indigenous community demands took place in at least a dozen cities nationwide, and were generally peaceful. While protests were initially organized to demand the rejection of nine legislative decrees, given Congressional action to suspend two of the decrees (ref), marchers tended to emphasize their solidarity with broader indigenous community aims and against the Garcia government.

¶3. (C) In Lima, police contacts estimated 7,000 participants. Tensions flared when university students launched Molotov cocktails at riot police, who responded with tear gas. One protester was hit with a tear gas canister. Outside Lima, some protests reportedly ranged in size from 200 participants in Piura to 8,400 in the entire province of Loreto (a small number relative to the large indigenous community in the region); injuries and clashes between police and protesters were minimal. In Arequipa protesters burned tires and threw eggs, and in Puno protesters vandalized the local APRA headquarters and continue to block a major road. The highway between Yurimaguas and Tarapoto remains blocked (now for its third week), but the number of protesters has reportedly dwindled to around 100. In Bagua, where police and protesters clashed on June 5, there was no protest. In general, protests were small, given the recent violence in Bagua.

Congress Suspends Seven Nationalist Members

¶4. (C) While relative calm prevailed on the streets, there was some tense drama inside Congress. Following Congress' June 10 vote to suspend decree 1090 ad 1064 (refs), 18

members of the Nationalist parliamentary bloc took to the floor of the chamber to protest the decision and initiated a hunger strike, they said, in solidarity with the Amazonian communities. (Comment: The PNP aim was for the decrees to be "derogated" once and for all, and mere indefinite suspension apparently fell short. End Comment.) The 18 PNP members remained on the floor until the following morning, preventing the start of the day's session. When they refused to disperse, congressional leadership met and recommended a 120-day suspension without pay for seven of them and formal censure for the other 11, for preventing Congress from functioning. The measure passed 58-11. The Nationalist Party called the measure dictatorial and racist, while Congress's President insisted that the rules do not allow members to conduct protests when they lose a vote.

Ministerial Moves

[15](#). (C) President Garcia has reshuffled his cabinet following the resignation last week of the Minister of Social Development and Women's Affairs Carmen Vildoso (refs) following the June 5 violence. APRA insider Nidya Vilchez, Minister of Housing since November 2008, was sworn in as the new Minister of Women and Social Development. Political independent Francis Allison replaces Vilchez at Housing. Allison has been serving as the mayor of the greater Lima district of Magdalena, where he is well-regarded as a capable administrator.
MCKINLEY